



Wireless Expands

October 24, 2007

(KAAL) -- If you're tired of all those dropped calls and dead spaces when you're in northern Iowa, we've got some good news.

The president of US Cellular says it's increasing coverage to the area.

But while U.S. Cellular is expanding...other providers could be leaving rural areas in the dark.

In rural areas where pay phones are sparse, having cell phone service can mean the difference between life and death.

"I can think of many examples where lives have been saved because we did have cell phones," says David Gentz.

Now, U.S. Cellular customers will have better service than they've had before.

That's because the provider put up a new tower to increase coverage in the area.

"We still have a few areas in the county here that don't have coverage, or the service is so poor," says Gentz.

But not all service providers have patchy coverage in the area.

"It's good, I think so, I haven't had any problems," says David Ulve.

If you have patchy service in this part of Iowa, the new tower may resolve this issue.

However, officials say without the Universal Service Fund, towers like this one may never be built.

"It would've never been built," says John Rooney.

The Universal Service Fund gives money to telephone providers to expand service in rural areas.

But soon, the FCC will put a cap on the fund for wireless companies... But not for landline providers.



"Landline guys that got their networks together 40 years ago and haven't done much to improve them are going to be continuing to draw out of that fund and draw out money in big bunches," says Rooney.

"I think we should keep on with it. We need service in all areas," says Ulve.

And the new tower will provide service to areas that were previously cell phone free.

US Cellular's new tower will increase coverage significantly for those traveling on I-35, so even if you don't live in northern Iowa, you'll benefit if your service provider is u-s cellular.